

Tale *Feathers*

September
2006

Volume 73
Number 5

St. Louis Audubon Open House

Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.
Powder Valley Nature Center Auditorium

New member or life-long, bring yourself and bring a friend and find out just what we've been up to lately.

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Yes, as most people know, we're big on birds. But what does that really mean, and is there more? Did you know that during the 2005/2006 school year, our volunteers presented educational programs to nearly 2,000 students, or that we offer programs as diverse as birds and bats, owls and rivers? Come hear, see, and feel just what we're all about—from field trips, to bird monitoring, to classroom programs, to conservation advocacy, and much, much more. Meet the people that make it happen and find out if there's something interesting for you. Bring along that friend or relative that looks at you sideways when you say, "Audubon." Whether you're new, been around for years, or haven't even joined, we guarantee you'll learn something new about St. Louis Audubon!

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer for 200 yards to Cragwold Rd. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance. Questions, call Cathy Devine at 314-962-3460 or Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities and Announcements

Mission Statement
of
The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals
To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

ASM Fall Weekend September 22-24 at Camp Clover Point

The Audubon Society of Missouri, the state's ornithological society since 1901, is having its annual fall meeting September 22 – 24 at Camp Clover Point at Lake of the Ozarks State Park. All are invited! The weekend features birding field trips led by members of the Missouri Bird Records Committee, a bird ID workshop, and presentations on:

The Missouri Important Bird Area program

The Conservation Area Checklist (CACHE) project,

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker search efforts by three ASM members who participated in the Cornell University search teams

“Birders Making a Difference”

The Grassland Coalition's Prairie Chicken recovery efforts

And of course, all-around fun and fellowship with birders from around the state. For more info, see the ASM website www.mobirds.org or contact ASM President, Sue Gustafson, at 314-968-8128.

SLAS Education Training and Class Sessions Available!

The dates for the training sessions for persons interested in working with the Education Committee have now been finalized. The first session will be held on Wed., Sept. 20 from 6:30 - 9:00 pm at Powder Valley Nature Center. This session will cover the basics on giving presentations and then we will have two of our programs given by two members of our committee showing just how we do it for our audience. On Wed., Oct. 11, we will have the second training session. We will have a review and then have three more programs presented by three more members of our committee. These five programs will be the most frequently requested of the twelve we currently have on our list.

Also, the Education Committee will be giving a class at Meramec Community College on Oct. 17 & 24 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm on **Owls and Woodpeckers of Missouri —Who's Holed up for the Night**. A field trip is also being planned in connection with this class — the date and location will be announced at the first session.

This course will give credit toward the Master Naturalist Certificate.

Traveling this Autumn? What to check out birds at your destination? Check out our website for links to National Audubon Society and other state chapters:
www.stlouisaudubon.org

Birding Trips September and October

John Solodar

September 9, Saturday. Tower Grove Park -

Join Torrey Berger in a search for fall migrants in Tower Grove Park starting at 8:00 AM. Lots of birds should be coming through by this date. We'll meet just east of the Gaddy Bird Garden.

September 23, Saturday - Carlyle Lake Pelagic*.

Once again we head to Carlyle Lake for this all day, three-part trip. Land birds and some waterfowl will be in order in the morning. Jim Malone and Joe Eades will meet birders at 6:30 AM in the McDonald's parking lot in the town of Carlyle, IL. If you choose not to make it that early, you can catch up with the group in Hazlet State Park at the Cherokee Hiking Trail area. For part two we will be on the lake for Sabine's and other Gulls and possibly some Phalaropes at mid-day. You should plan to be at the West Access Marina, which is a little way south of the road to Cherokee Hiking Trail, no later than 10:15 AM. The boats will leave at 10:30 AM promptly. (Reservations are required for the boat trip which will cost \$25.00 per person.) After the boat trip we will finish at parking lot # 3 and search for shorebirds. Sometimes the group has met for dinner at the end. Joe Eades is coordinating reservations for the boat trip. Contact him by e-mail at joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com.

**See additional article in the newsletter for more information regarding this trip.*

October 14, Saturday Two

Rivers/Riverlands/Confluence. This trip is structured for flexibility. The leader, Mike Thelen, will be going all day and you are invited to be there with him. However, if you are inclined to do only part of the trip you can do that easily as well. We'll start at 8:00 AM at the Gilbert Lake parking lot just north of the Brussels Ferry in Illinois. Bring your lunch as there is a good chance of eating on the porch at the Two Rivers Headquarters building while watching the pond below and the lake in the distance.

October 25, Wednesday Busch Conservation

Area/Weldon Springs This will be the first of our new Wednesday birding trips to accommodate those who like weekday birding. Pat Lueders will be our leader and the trip will start at 8:00 AM. There will

be lots of fall migrants to see in the Busch/Weldon Spring area and the weather should be ideal at this time of year.

How to get there

Tower Grove Park (Gaddy Bird Garden)- Within the city of St. Louis, go from I-44 or I-64 (Highway 40) to south Kingshighway. From I-64 go about 1 mile to left on Magnolia. Park on street; walk to the east side of the brushy area (Gaddy Bird Garden) at the northwest corner of the park. We'll meet by the yellow Gaddy Bird Garden sign.

Carlyle Lake - Take I-64 east across the Poplar Street Bridge. Exit I-64 at Hwy 50 East (toward Carlyle), where Hwy 158 crosses I-64. Follow Hwy 50 to Hwy 127 and turn left at the junction. Turn right into McDonalds. Meet in the parking lot. There are a couple of motels close to the McDonalds for those who would prefer to drive over the evening before.

Two Rivers NWR- Take Hwy 367 north from I-270 as if going to Riverlands. The designation changes to Hwy 67 just beyond the 4th traffic light, but continue straight ahead. Hwy 67 over the Clark Bridge into Alton IL. Go left on Route 143 at the end of the bridge and left again at the intersection with Route 100. Follow Route 100 upriver through Grafton. Meet in the Gilbert Lake parking lot just north of the Brussels Ferry.

Busch Conservation Area - Take U.S.40/I-64 west into St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south from U.S 40 about 1 mile to the traffic light at Hwy D. Turn right and go about 1.5 miles to the entrance on the right. Turn left at the "T" to Hampton Lake and meet in the parking lot.

Audubon Missouri Annual Meeting
Saturday, September 16, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Cole Camp, Missouri

This annual meeting has been designed by Audubon Chapter leaders for Chapter leaders as a means to share information and ideas about best leadership practices, and new tools and resources.

Stroll Hilonesome Prairie with Roger Still, Andy Forbes, MDC, and Cole Camp representatives on a Saturday morning field trip

Hear a report from Sue Schuble about her experiences at the NAS Hog Island Leadership Camp

See more online usage of the recently updated NAS Chapter Services web site

See an introduction to the NAS beta Membership Services web site

Participate in a Chapter leaders' round table discussion of conservation projects and potential sources for project funding

Hear from the City of Cole Camp representatives, Audubon Missouri, and MDC about the IBA Hilonesome Prairie project

Registration is \$10.00. Please call Katy Burkett by September 11, 2006 to reserve lunch. Lodging is available on Friday night near the inviting old German town of Cole Camp. The Bunkhouse, 660-547-3020, is located 12 miles south of Cole Camp on highway 65, where fifteen rooms will be reserved until August 9. Several restaurants feature menus geared toward eco-tourists who savor home-cooked meals.

Plan to join Audubon Chapter leaders across the state to see how the Important Bird Areas project is unfolding in Cole Camp, to network with other chapter leaders, and to share ideas about your chapter and gain new tools for the coming year!

Check the Audubon Missouri web site for more information and directions, or contact your chapter president for updates.



Painted Bunting submitted by Mike Thelen

St. Louis Audubon Participates in the annual
Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Conference
August 18 -19

Sue Gustafson, Conservation Committee

The fourth annual Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) Conference was held August 18-19, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia, Mo. MoBCI is the 33 member partnership of organizations, including St. Louis Audubon, which has united for the purpose of conserving Missouri's bird resources. The theme of this year's conference was "expanding good habitat." Presentations included an unveiling of the new forest plan of the Mark Twain National Forest, Greater Prairie Chicken restoration in Missouri, an update on one of the national bird plans, and a presentation by the Mo Dept of Natural Resources. The conference also included project updates from 2005-06 MoBCI grant recipients and breakout discussion sessions designed to help guide the direction of MoBCI into the future.

It was wonderful to see so many groups represented, from government agencies and nonprofit organizations, to hunters and birders, all with a mutual interest in bird conservation. Linda Tossing continues to represent St. Louis Audubon on the MoBCI Steering Committee.

Tower Grove Park

First in a series of occasional articles discussing changing conditions at areas frequented by St. Louis area birders.

John Solodar

Tower Grove Park suffered extensive damage from the storm of July 19, 2006. The total count of trees lost is now approaching 300 according to John Karel, Park Director. A drive through on August 10 revealed quite a few piles of branches still around, but most of the evidence of the loss is in tree stumps where severely damaged trees have had to be cut down. The stumps will be ground down sometime but they will be visible when birders visit Tower Grove during fall migration.

The following observations, of interest to the birding community, were made on August 10. Near the Gaddy bird garden there are quite a few stumps of trees, mostly at the eastern end. The eastern entrance to the garden has lost a lot of the bushes that used to shelter birds. At least 14 stumps of trees are visible in the oak grove beyond the open area east of the garden as one walks toward the creek. Most of these were in the oak grove but some were from the smaller trees northeast of the grove. The oak grove has been the location for sighting many warblers over the years and the loss of trees here will mean many fewer perches for them and much less food. Heading down toward the creek we saw 10-15 more tree stumps and a large pile of mulch next to the horse stables. More tree stumps were near the stables as well. Cypress circle seemed to have survived fairly well with only one tree down. The area around Jack Van's pool has lost a few trees as well.

The cleanup cost to Tower Grove Park's operating budget has been substantial and John Karel welcomes any financial help that the birding community can offer. The St. Louis Audubon Society will be asked to make a donation of \$1000. Individuals can send donations directly to: Tower Grove Park Storm Fund, Tower Grove Park, 4256 Magnolia, St. Louis, MO 63110. Please mention that you are a member of St. Louis Audubon Society.

After touring the park to assess storm damage, Nancy and I met with John Karel to discuss a few other things of interest to birders. We covered three topics.

Karel is concerned that many of the smaller trees in the bird garden area have gotten so tall that there is now a dearth of smaller plants in the under story upon which birds can perch. One solution is to thin out some of the trees to open up the ground level area so that more light can get in.

This was the subject of a proposal by WGNSS a few years ago that never quite got off the ground. It may be time to revisit this. Nancy and I will bring a certified arborist and former forester for University City to the park soon to ask her judgment.

There are quite a number of exotic invasive plants coming into the garden. Potentially the worst is bush honeysuckle and a quick glance revealed quite a bit of tree of heaven as well. I asked John Karel if he would entertain the idea of a volunteer group going in to eliminate them and he said, "Please." I'll go back and evaluate how much needs to be done based on my experience of doing this in Ruth Park Woods in University City. Afterwards I will post a note on MOBirds for volunteers and set a date if we need a large crew of people. If you would like to help send a message to solodar@sbcgloal.net.

The bubbler is an ongoing problem. Currently it is broken and water can be seen flowing from under the base of the rocks. The pipe is either disconnected or broken. Karel will have this fixed, hopefully by the first week of September for fall migration. The long underground feed line for the bubbler was replaced just 2-3 years ago, but it has had a series of breaks since. It is leaking again and a huge pool of water has formed going back from the bubbler and extending well back into the lawn along the feeder pipe. Some of this water is from the broken bubbler connection, but most is believed to be coming from a break in the line. The whole thing may have to be torn out and replaced.



SLAS Annual Pelagic Trip

Set for September 23

Joe Eades

The St. Louis Audubon Society will be teaming up with the Illinois Ornithological Society for the Carlyle Pelagic trip on Saturday, September 23. Target bird will be the generally pelagic Sabine's Gull, with hopes for a possible Jaeger or Red Phalarope. This is the absolute peak of Fall birding and possibly the best birding area within about an hour and 15 minute or so drive of St. Louis. Warblers and other migrating land birds should be at their peak. In 2003 and 2004, several of the group were treated to views of a male Black-throated Blue warbler. A variety of Gulls and Terns will likely be present in good numbers, and if the lake level is not too low, shore birding could be good. The Raptor migration will be in full swing as well. This will be one of your best opportunities to see over 100 species of birds in one day. You'll have a chance to bird with some extremely sharp birders from Illinois as well as a few Missouri Maniacs!

Space for this trip is limited to 25 people. The Illinois group will have about the same number of people. The cost for participating is \$25.00 for each person to cover boat rental and gas. Please bring any old bread/pretzels and/or popcorn, etc. which we can use to throw and to attract the gulls close to the boat. All age and skill levels are welcome! Meeting time: 6:30 am. Meeting Place: McDonald's on IL highway 127 in Carlyle (just north of the intersection of IL 50 and IL 127). Please bring a sack lunch and plenty of water. There will be an opportunity to grab fast food, but you still want to have snacks and drinks to tide you over. There will be a fair amount of walking and the trip will last all day. Bring comfortable walking shoes. We will start by looking for abundant migrating land birds at Hazlet State Park from ~6:45 am until 10:30. We will then take out the boats for a nice ride around the lake looking for zooties from 11:00 am until 2:00. You must be at the marina by 10:45 because the boat will depart promptly once loaded. An opportunity for McDonald's fast food will likely be available after the boat trip. We will likely spend the rest of the day at parking lot #3 looking for shorebirds. Anyone who is interested can join us in a group dinner after the day's activities. You can contact me at joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com for reservations. Information on lodging and camping at Carlyle Lake is available at this link: <http://carlylelake.com/> Let me know if you need hard copies of the lodging information if you don't have access to a computer. Please make your checks payable to me, Joe Eades. I'd prefer you send the checks to me at least one week in advance. My home address is 517 Willow Lane, Kirkwood, Mo 63122. Cash would be appreciated on the day of the trip since we are paying in cash for the boat and gas. Good Birding!



**Mark your calendars! Forest Park Kennedy Woods
Annual Honeysuckle Cut**

Saturday, November 11

Sue Gustafson, Kennedy Woods Advisory Group

We've had tremendous success in helping to restore the understory in the Kennedy Woods of Forest Park with our annual honeysuckle cut. This year's date has been set for Saturday, November 11, with a rain date of Saturday, November 18. Note that it's a Saturday this year, instead of Sunday. Come for the morning shift from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. or the afternoon shift from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bring loppers and gloves; the Round-up and paintbrushes will be provided. Watch upcoming newsletters for the meeting place in the park.



Blue Dasher Dragonfly photographed in St. Louis County
on July 18, 2006 by Mike Thelen.

Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Society 2006 - 2007

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As a joint member with National Audubon, you will receive National Audubon's quarterly magazine (Audubon) as well as St. Louis Audubon Society's Newsletter (Tale Feathers). Now you also have the opportunity to join only the St. Louis Audubon Society, receive Tale Feathers, and participate in the educational and conservation activities of St. Louis Audubon. There is no distinction between individual and family membership. Dues cover all members at the same address. For information, call (314) 822-6595.

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_____ Membership/\$35 For renewal in the National Audubon Society, we recommend that you use the forms supplied by National Audubon. For more information, contact Anne Rankin Horton at 636-256-3402.

_____ Introductory Membership / \$20 _____ Special Two -Year Introductory Membership / \$30

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